

## ***Administrative changes –I***

Dr. **Randy Larsen**, who has been department chair for seven years, announced (May 20) that he accepted Dean **Eric Eisenberg**'s invitation to become CAS Associate Dean for Research starting August 1.



Dr. Larsen

He added, "I strongly believe that we have developed into one of the strengths of the college and have continued our rise in national and international recognition...."

Dean Eric Eisenberg wrote, "As an accomplished scientist and administrator, [Dr. Larsen] brings a wealth of valuable experience to the role."

## ***Administrative changes –II***

Dr. **Wayne C. Guida** (professor of chemistry) was named *interim chair* and Dr. **Jennifer Lewis** (*vide infra*) was named *interim associate chair*.



Dr. Wayne C. Guida

## ***More about Chemistry...***

### **First Schneller Chemistry Legacy Lecture**

The inaugural lecture was presented on April 30 by Dr. **Eric N. Jacobsen**, Seldon professor of chemistry and chair of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Harvard University. His topic was "Anion-Binding Catalysis."



Drs. Peter Zhang, Eric Jacobsen, Randy Larsen, Stewart Schneller

The lectureship is being funded by contributions from Mrs. **Aina Schneller** and Dr. **Stewart Schneller**, professor of chemistry at Auburn University. Dr., Schneller was a USF chemistry faculty member (1971-94) and department chair (1986-94) before accepting a deanship at Auburn.

### **Awards –I**

Dr. **Randy Larsen** announced that Dr. **Jianfeng Cai** received notification for funding of his NIH R01 award entitled "Alpha-AApeptides as a novel class of antimicrobial biomaterials". The project is funded at \$1,490,390 for five years.

### **Awards -II**

Dr. **Jianfeng Cai** also received (June) a "Biomatik Distinguished Junior Faculty Award" from The Chinese-American Chemistry & Chemical Biology Professors Association (CAPA)".

### **Awards-III**

Dr. Larsen announced (July 17<sup>th</sup>) "It is my pleasure to announce that an \$282,000 NSF MRI grant entitled "MRI: Acquisition of a high-performance cluster to support computational materials research and education at the University of South Florida and partnering institutions in Tampa Bay," has been recommended for funding by the Division of Chemistry. The team is headed by Prof. **Arjan van der Vaart** (Chemistry) and includes **Brian Space** (Chemistry, co-PI), **Venket Bhethanabotla** (Chemical Engineering, co-PI), **Sameer Vamra** (CMMB), **Lee Woodcock** (Chemistry), **Wayne Guida** (Chemistry), **Babu Joseph** (Chemical Engineering), **David Rogers** (Chemistry), **Angela Perry** (University of Tampa), **Steven Shipman** (New College), **Joseph Larkin** (Eckerd College), and

**David Grove** (Eckerd College), as well as **Ivan Oleynik** (Physics) and **Inna Ponomareva** (Physics).

"**David Rabson** (Physics), **Lilia Woods** (Physics), **Sagar Pandit** (Physics) are additional senior personnel on this interdisciplinary infrastructure project. "

"The funding will provide additional support to the research computing cluster at USF which supports an expanding cluster of extraordinary computational scientists! "

### **Awards-IV**

Dr. **Ioannis Gelis** (assistant professor of chemistry) received his first NIH R01 award, Dr. Randy Larsen announced July 31).

Dr. **Larsen** added , "What makes this even more impressive is that it is his first grant ever submitted as an independent investigator!"



Dr. Gelis

The award entitled "Assembly mechanism of cochaperone-kinase complexes" is funded at \$1,436,709 over five years.

Dr. **Larsen** stated, "This project is a component of our outstanding drug discovery program at USF and is also part of the SNSM Biomedical Research cluster both

of which continue to produce high impact high reward research!”

## ***More good news***

### **Dr. Lewis named ACS Fellow**

Professor **Jennifer Lewis** was cited for having contributed significantly to research in chemistry education by introducing measurement standards for instrument development and conducting influential research on the impacts of curricular change.



Dr. Lewis

She was also recognized for a deep and active commitment to an inclusive ACS via activities to welcome new members and engage multiple perspectives in committee service for the Division of Chemical Education.

Dr. Lewis is the first USF faculty member to be named an ACS Fellow

She was formally recognized at the August ACS meeting in Boston.

### **Honorary degree to Dr. Buchwald**

Dr. **Stephen Leffler Buchwald** was the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Science at USF's 105<sup>th</sup> convocation commencement Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Dr. Buchwald is the

Camille Dreyfus Professor of Chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



USF System President Judy Genshaft and Dr. Stephen Buchwald prior to the ceremony

He was also advisor to chemistry faculty Dr. **Jon Antilla** and Dr. **Peter Zhang** when they were postdoctoral research associates at MIT.

### **FAME 2015 meeting**

The Department was well represented at the 91<sup>st</sup> meeting of state chemists, held in Innisbrook, May 7-9. Papers were presented (in some cases more than one) by Drs. **Xin Cui**, **Ioannis Gelis**, **Randy Larsen** (2 invited lectures), **Dean Martin** (3), **David Rogers** (2), **Arjan van der Vaart** (2 invited lectures), **Lee Woodcock** (2 invited lectures), **Peter Zhang** (2 invited lectures), and Mr. **Arthur Maknenko**, Ms. **Tarah A. Word**. Dr. **Shengqian Ma** presided at a materials chemistry session.

Poster presenters (with their principal collaborator in parenthesis) included Mr. **Mehdi Rashvand Avei** (Dr. **David Rogers**), Mr. **Christian Cioce** (Dr. **Brian Space**), **Dr. Xin Cui** & Ms. **Courtney**

**Smith** (Dr. **Peter Zhang**), Mr. Phillip **Hudson** (Dr. **Lee Woodcock**) Mr. **Ali A. Husain** (Dr. **Kirpal Bisht**), Dr. **Li-Mei Jin** (Dr. **Peter Zhang**), Ms. **Fiona Kerns** (Dr. **Lee Woodcock**).

### Women's Leadership...

Dr. Jennifer Lewis, professor of chemistry, was among the speakers at the meeting of the "Women's Leadership in Doctoral Education & Careers in Academia" held at the USF College of Public Health May 9<sup>th</sup>.

She spoke in the "Advancing Research and Scholarship" section and in the plenary session ("Finding a Good Mentor – Building a Foundation for your Success"), a session that President **Judy Genshaft** introduced.

### Featured faculty

Research by Dr. **Julie Harmon** and six collaborators was featured on the cover of *Journal of Material Chemistry A* (July 2015).

Research by Dr. **LiJune Ming** and Dr. **Vasiliki Lykourinou** was featured on the cover of *European Journal of Inorganic Chemistry* (February 2015).

Research by Dr. **David M. Rogers** was featured on the cover of *Journal of Chemical Physics* (February 2015).

Two research articles by Dr. **Jeffrey R. Raker** and collaborators were *ACS Editors Choice* selections. The selections are granted free access to all readers in recognition of their importance to the global scientific community.

### Dr. Raker's external appointment

Once again, a member of the USF Chemistry faculty has been appointed to the leadership of the ACS Examinations Institute (ACS-EI). Dr. **Jeffrey R. Raker** was appointed Associate Director of the ACS-EI effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Raker follows



Dr. Raker

in the footsteps of two former USF Chemistry faculty: Dr. **Theodore Ashford** (Director of the ACS-EI from 1946-1986) and Dr. **Jeff Davis** (Director of the ACS-EI in 1987). The ACS-EI was housed at USF from 1960-1987.

### New Faculty

Joining our department in August were

Dr. **Theresa Evans Nguyen**,  
Dr. **Michael Shi**, and  
Dr. **Juan del Valle, Jr.**

### In the Department

#### Staff Appreciation Luncheon

A semi-annual luncheon was held May 5th in appreciation of the hard work done by

Staff members and to recognize their vital role in the operation of The Department. Guests perused a menu from *Chopstix*, a nearby Chinese restaurant, and the meals of their choice were delivered to the Chemistry conference room. About 12 Staff members were able to attend.



Photo courtesy Ms. Lorene Hall-Jennings

The event was hosted by Mrs. **Barbara Martin** and her husband. Mrs. **Linda Lowe**, fiscal and business assistant, coordinated the event.



Mrs. Lowe

### **Birthday celebration**

Some 17 persons, mostly staff, gathered June 22 to celebrate Dr. **Randy Larsen's** birthday and to express appreciation for his seven years' service as department chair.

Ms. **Linda Lowe** obtained a special cake that noted his enthusiasm for fishing (bass in this case).



Photo credit: Ms. Adrienne McCain

Ms. **Kimberly Read** obtained Chinese food from his favorite restaurant, and a faculty couple served as hosts.

Dr. **Larsen** enjoyed pulling a sample decoration from his cake.



Ms. **Cheryl Graham** (fiscal and business assistant) and Ms. **Kristi Kirby** (advisor) were among those who enjoyed the gathering.

## A loss of a treasured person

**Samantha Santos DaSilva** joined the Department of Chemistry in January 2008 as a student assistant. She worked with us throughout her undergraduate career and when she graduated she stepped into the role of a laboratory technician and continued her education pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health.



Samantha

She completed her Master's degree this spring, and now she is leaving us to join the Peace Corps. At the end of July, Samantha will start a two-year appointment in Cambodia with the Peace Corps.

Ms. Kimberly Read (Manager, Fiscal and Business affairs) wrote, "She has been an exemplary member of our team and we will miss her, but we wish her all the best as she takes this next important step in her career."

## New faces

Dr. **Randy Larsen** announced (May 18<sup>th</sup>) "Mr. **Ryan Jahn** is joining our department as the Unit Research Administrator (URA) assuming the position from Debbie Gee. Ryan has been a CAS URA and has worked closely with CMMB in pre- and post-award. He comes to us with significant experience."



Mr. Ryan Jahn

## Chemistry graduates -May

A larger- than- usual number of students were graduated on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the 6 pm commencement. The graduates (and their advisors in parentheses) are listed below:

### *Doctoral graduates*

- Dr. **Frankie Costanza** (Dr. **Jianfeng Cai**)
- Dr. **Daniel Dempsey** (Dr. **Merkler**)
- Dr. **Sung Yub Han** (Dr. **Xiao Li**)
- Dr. **Yaogang Hu** (Dr. **Jianfeng Cai**)
- Dr. **Kristen Jeffries** (Dr. **David Merkler**)
- Dr. **Youngran Ji** (Dr. **Jon Antilla**)
- Dr. **Aleksandra Karolak** (Dr. **Arjan van der Vaart**)
- Dr. **Jordany Maignan** (Dr. **Roman Manetsch**)
- Dr. **Mona Mohamed** (Dr. **M. J. Zaworotko**; Dr. **Brian Space**)
- Dr. **Hasnaa Mouttaki** (Dr. **M. Eddaoudi**; Dr. **Brian Space**)
- Dr. **Yuri Pevzner** (Dr. **Lee Woodcock**; Dr. **Wayne C. Guida**)
- Dr. **Sachel Villafane-Garcia** (Dr. **Jennifer E. Lewis**)
- Dr. **Christopher Witowski** (Dr. **Bill Baker**)
- Dr. **Haifan Wu** (Dr. **Jianfeng Cai**)

### **Masters students**

- Ms. **Megan Barber** (Dr. **Roman Manetsch**; Dr. **Ed Tueros**)
- Ms. **Tran Khanh Bao Hoang** (Dr. **Shengqian Ma**)
- Ms. **Lacey Lux** (Dr. **Shengqian Ma**)
- Mr. **Christopher Lizardi** (Dr. **Peter Zhang**)
- Mr. **Perry Mitchell** (Dr. **Ed Tueros**).

### **Chemistry graduates- August**

#### *Doctoral graduates*

- Dr. **Tony Pham** (Dr. **Brian Space**)
- Dr. **Christian Cioce** (Dr. **Brian Space**; Dr. **Lee Woodcock**)
- Dr. **Tara A. Word** (Dr. **Randy Larsen**)
- Dr. **Qiao** ( Dr. **Cai**)

#### *Masters candidate*

- Ms. **Veri Michael** (Dr. **Bill Baker**)

More than 2800 students at Tampa and USF-St Petersburg received diplomas.

### **Chem-Seeds program**

The 2015 NSF-sponsored REU participants and their current schools are listed below

- Mr. **Reinoldo Colon**, U, Puerto Rico
- Mr, **Nathan Frantz**, Manchester U.
- Mr. **Joseph Lee**, Western Carolina U.
- Mr. **Kevin Petersen**, USF
- Mr. **Anthony Howcroft**, U. Kansas
- Mr. **Vincent Ovalle**, Loyola Marymount U.
- Ms. **Ashley Parisi-Goldblatt**,USF
- Mr. **Giovanni Rodriguez- Diaz**, U. Puerto Rico
- Ms. **Sylvia Umegbolu**, U. Pittsburgh

Each was provided with a stipend and the opportunity to live in a USF dorm for

convenience. Each was assigned a faculty member and graduate student to work with during the eight-week program.

Mr. **Geoffrey Gray**, a doctoral candidate, served as graduate coordinator. The program was the result of a grant application by PI Dr. **Santiago Sandi-Urena** with faculty Co-PIs.

In addition to their research activities, the students attended guest lectures by faculty members, and field trips to sites of interest to chemists, including the Cape Kennedy Space Station.

The program had a highlight July 29th with a poster session as part of a USF NSF REU-RET Research Day event .

Student research was summarized using a poster format. Chemistry faculty judged the posters. Cash prizes totaling \$175 were donated by a faculty couple.



Students holding award checks: Ms. Parisi-Goldblatts and Mr. Howcroft with Dr. Larsen and the editor.

*First prize, Mr. Giovanni Rodriguez-Diaz*  
*Second prize:Ms. Ashley Parisi-Goldblatts*  
*Third prize: Mr. Anthony Howcroft*

## Tampa Bay Section –ACS

The section's Awards Dinner was held May 5<sup>th</sup> at the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Interdisciplinary research building. The leading organizer was the section chair, **Kimberly Fields** (Ph.D.'10), permanent instructor in chemistry, who also serves as faculty advisor to the Chemistry Society.



Dr. Fields

The 50-year members honored included Dr. **Milton Johnston**, USF professor of chemistry.

### **Chemistry milestone**

The Chemical Abstracts Service Registry<sup>SM</sup> was started 50 years ago to help researchers “quickly and confidently unique organic and inorganic substances.” June 23, 2015, was the day the 100 millionth small molecule was registered look up 1786400-23-4.

### **News and updates re: Persons you may know**

**Bruce Anderson** (B.S. '75) D.D.S is an optometrist in private practice in Tampa. In addition he is a faculty member at the USF Eye Institute.

**Yao Chen** (Ph.D. '14) holds a post-doctoral position in Prof. Seth Cohen's research group at U.C. San Diego Her doctoral advisor was Dr. **Sengqian Ma**.

**Courtney Jerome DuBoulay** (Ph.D. '13), an advisee of Dr. **Wayne Guida**, has been a faculty member of Portland (OR) CC.

**Dr. Jack E. Fernandez** (1960-1995, Charter faculty; professor of chemistry emeritus) after retirement devoted himself to a life-long passion for writing.” He published three historical novels : *Café con Leche* (2005), *Conquistador* (2006), and *Viva Matilde!* (2007). *Professors and Other Misfits* (2009) is a departure from his earlier novels and “delves into a seamy side of university life.”

**Joseph (Joey) Gill** (Ph.D.'14) is an adjunct faculty member at Polk State College and a faculty member at Tampa Preparatory School teaching AP Chemistry. Dr. **Peter Zhang** was his advisor.

**Kurt van Horn** (Ph.D. '13) worked as a postdoc for his doctoral advisor, Dr. **Roman Manetsch**, then in January 2015 joined the research group of Dr. **Adrian Renlo's** in the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the UC-San Francisco.

**Tao Liang** (Ph.D. '14), a doctoral advisee of Dr. **Jon Antilla**, now holds a post-doctoral position with Prof. **Michael Krische** at the University of Texas.

**Christopher Lizardi** (M.S. '15) is now employed as a Technical Regulatory Specialist with ChemTel Inc. His advisor was Dr. **Peter Zhang**.

**Michael Rao, Ph.D.** (BA chemistry '87) is The fifth president of Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU Health System, a position he has held for six years.

He leads a national research university and with a leading academic medical center that is the largest employer in the Richmond area with about 20,000 employees.



Dr. Rao “has been in higher education for more than 20 years, starting in California in 1992 when he became president of Mission College.” At the time, he was the youngest college president in the United States.

He received the USF outstanding Chemistry alumni award in 1997.

**Adrian Villalta-Cerdas** (Ph.D.'14), a chemistry instructor at Cal State Bakersfield, is doing independent research and started a collaborative project with colleague with researchers in US and Turkey. He also had a poster accepted for a Gordon Research conference in ChemEd (summer, 2014).

Saw **Cherie Yestrebky** (Ph.D.'94) at FAME 2015, where she presented two interesting papers in the Chemical Education section. She is a professor of chemistry at the University of Central Florida, which is the second largest university in the USA. She also continues as interim chair.

**Haifan Wu** (Ph.D. '15) is engaged in post-doctoral research with Dr. Bill Degrado, School of Pharmacy, UC - San Francisco, according to Dr. **Jiangfeng Cai**.

### ***Chemistry Dept Donors***

The following is a list of those who made gifts to the Department of Chemistry, January 1- June 30, 2015, as obtained from the College of Arts and Sciences Office of Development. We are grateful for the special support of the alumni, faculty, friends, staff, and corporate and foundation donors listed here.

#### Individual Donors

Lauren Beth Albaum

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## ***What did they do after?***

For over 15 years, we have been trying to keep track of our chemistry alumni in what we call the “Tracking Project,” and the results may be found on our web page. Look for “Directory” and find either “Graduate Alumni” or “Undergraduate Alumni.”

It is far from complete, but we lack the necessary resources to be as good as we would like to be. We value the help of loyal alumni in bringing us up-to-date.

## ***Around USF***

### **“Green is the new black”**

USF Student government voted to adopt green alternatives to the traditional black cap and gown that a student would wear at commencement.

Each set was made from 100 percent post-consumer plastic bottles (an average of 23 bottles per set). And the gowns could be recycled after each use.

There was no other option permitted for an estimated 4,344 graduates on the Tampa campus.

### **Patent announcement**

USF “ranks 10<sup>th</sup> nationally and 13<sup>th</sup> among universities worldwide for US patents,” according to a report released by the National Academy of Inventors and the Intellectual Property Owners Association (June, 2015).

The report indicated that USF had 104 patents in 2014 and noted the important role patents play in university research.

## **New USF recognition**

USF was designated (June) an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity University” by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. It is now one of 48 so designated.

USF with a budget of \$1.5 billion exerts an economic force of \$4.4 billion to the Tampa Bay Area, according to a survey made by a committee of 50 judges.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thanks go to Ms. **Kimberly Read** for text and pictures; and to Mr. **Christopher Collier** (assist.news editor, *Oracle*) for the APLU news story. Chemical Abstract Service (stnews@cas.org, June 30). Dr. **Rao** biography[<http://president.vcu.edu/bio/index.html> (7/7/15)]. Dr. **Fernandez** material from book cover published by AuthorHouse®. Ms. Ann Serota for donor names. Dr. Daniel Cruz-Ramrez for Student poster prize recipients photo. Mr. Geoffrey Gray for Chem Seeds information.

## **News and feedback**

### ***Interim Chair's Address:***

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### ***Web page:***

<http://chemistry.usf.edu>

**Webmaster:** Mr. Brant Tudor



Mr. Tudor

### ***News:***

For past issues you may have missed, please see the departmental Web page.

### ***News for us or comments?***

Please write to: [dfmartin@usf.edu](mailto:dfmartin@usf.edu)